

CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A ~~Spread~~er structure ~~(10)~~ for insertion into a hollow organ, said spreader structure comprising:

an elongated body having a circumference and a longitudinal axis;

a first connecting section located at one end of the elongated body;

a second connecting section located at a second end of the elongated body opposite the first connecting section;

a plurality of having ~~spread~~er rods ~~(12) which,~~ radiating from ~~a~~ the first connecting section, ~~(14),~~ extending substantially ~~in~~ along the longitudinal direction ~~(36) of the spreader structure (10)~~ axis of said elongated body to ~~at~~ the second connecting section ~~(16), are~~ and distributed over the circumference of the elongated body of the spreader structure (10) and wherein the spreader rods are positionable, ~~and can be positioned~~ against a wall of the hollow organ by means of radial expansion; and

~~characterized in that the spreader rods (10) have at least one area of~~ said spreader rods (22) in along the longitudinal direction axis having that has reduced flexural stiffness in comparison to adjacent areas ~~(20, 24)~~ thereto.

2. (currently amended) The sSpread~~er~~ structure according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the at least one area ~~(22) that has~~ having reduced flexural stiffness ~~in comparison to the adjacent areas (20, 24)~~ has a reduced cross sectional area.

3. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to Claim 1, ~~or~~
~~2, characterized in that~~ wherein the at least one area (22) ~~having~~ reduced
flexural stiffness has a non-linear rod section.

4. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to ~~one of~~
~~Claim 1s 1 to 3, characterized in that~~ wherein the at least one area (22) ~~that~~
~~has~~ having reduced flexural stiffness has a meander-shaped rod section.

5. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to ~~one of~~
~~Claims 1 to 4, characterized in that~~ wherein the at least one area ~~that has~~ having
reduced flexural stiffness has a wave-shaped rod section.

6. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to ~~one of~~
~~Claims 1 to 5, characterized in that~~ wherein the at least one area ~~that has~~ having
reduced flexural stiffness has a zigzag-shaped rod section.

7. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to ~~one of~~
~~Claims 1 to 6, characterized in that~~ wherein the at least one area (22) ~~that~~
~~has~~ having reduced flexural stiffness has a square cross section.

8. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to ~~one of~~
~~Claims 1 to 7, characterized in that~~ wherein the first and second connecting

sections (14, 16) are designed as central hubs of the spreader rods (12) in the area of the longitudinal axis (36) of the spreader structure (10).

9. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to ~~one of~~ Claims 1 to 8, characterized in that wherein at least one of the connecting sections (16) has an opening (28) through which a central rod (30) can be slid through to the ~~second~~ other connecting section (14).

10. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to ~~one of~~ Claims 1 to 9, characterized in that wherein the first and second connecting sections (14, 16) are substantially cylindrical.

11. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to ~~one of~~ Claims 1 to 10, characterized in that wherein in the starting position of the spreader structure (10), each of the spreader rods (12), starting from a the first connecting section (14, 16), has a first section (18, 26) that radially curves outward as well as a subsequent substantially straight second section (20, 24).

12. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to ~~one of~~ Claims 1 to 11, characterized in that wherein the plurality of spreader rods comprises six spreader rods (12) ~~are provided that are~~ evenly distributed over the circumference of the spreader structure (10).

13. (currently amended) ~~A~~ Spreader ~~structure—(10), in particular~~
~~according to one of Claims 1 to 12, for insertion into a hollow organ, said~~
~~spreader structure comprising:~~

an elongated body having a circumference and a longitudinal axis;
a first connecting section located at one end of the elongated body;
a second connecting section located at a second end of the elongated
body opposite said first connecting section;

~~having a plurality of spreader rods (12) that extending from a the first~~
~~connecting section (14) substantially in a along the longitudinal direction~~
~~(36) axis of the elongated body of the spreader structure (10) to a the second~~
~~connecting section (16), are and distributed over the circumference of the~~
~~elongated body of the spreader structure (10), and wherein the spreader rods~~
can be positioned against a wall of the hollow organ by means of radial
expansion;

~~characterized in that a filter membrane (40) is arranged between at~~
~~least two spreader rods (12), and that wherein said filter membrane can assume~~
~~an a substantially unfolded state by means of the radial expansion of the~~
spreader rods (12).

14. (currently amended) The ~~S~~ spreader structure according to Claim 13,
~~characterized in that~~ further comprising a filter membrane (40) ~~is arranged~~
between all adjacent spreader rods (12).

15. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to Claim 13 or 14, further comprising a distal end section, a proximal end section, and a midsection, characterized in that wherein the filter membrane (40) extends starting from a the distal end section of the spreader structure to the midsection thereof.

16. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to one of Claims 13 to 15, characterized in that wherein the filter membrane (40) extends starting from a the proximal end section of the spreader structure to the midsection thereof.

17. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to one of Claims 13 to 16, characterized in that wherein the filter membrane (40) has pores (42) created by means of at least one of boreholes, braided woven strands (44), and/or a net structure.

18. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to Claim 16 17, characterized in that wherein the pores (42) have a free diameter ranging between approximately 50 μm and 100 μm .

19. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to one of Claims 13 to 18, characterized in that wherein the filter membrane (40) is

made of at least one of nitinol, ePTFE, dacron, polyester, polyurethane, polyacrylic, silicone, and/or EPDM.

20. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to one of Claims 13 to 19, characterized in that wherein the filter membrane (40) is attached to at least one spreader rod (12) by means of HF-welding, gluing, recasting, or hot pressing.

21. (currently amended) The Sspreader structure according to one of Claims 13 to 20, characterized in that wherein the filter membrane (40) is formed between at least two spreader rods (12) by means at least one of dipping and/or spraying.

22. (currently amended) The spreader structure according to Claim 21, Use of a wherein use of spreader structure (10) according to one of Claims 1 to 21 can be selected from a group comprising: as a miniature catch basket for gallstones, urethroliths, kidney or bile duct stones; for trapping foreign bodies in the esophagus; in urology and gastroenterology; in the area of the peripheral and the coronary circulatory systems; as a distal embolic protection; as a temporary vena cava filter; in a septic occluding system and/or in an aneurysm occlusion system, and/or as a blood particle filter or foreign body trap assist, and/or in contrast nephropathy.

23. (currently amended) The spreader structure according to Claim 21,
wherein use of Use of a said spreader structure (10) can be selected from a
group comprising: as a metal electrode according to one of Claims 1 to 22 for
introducing heat to a wall of the hollow organ, and in particular for
performing an electrocoagulation at the site.

24. (currently amended) The Sspreader device structure having a spreader
structure (10) according to one of Claims 1 to 21, further comprising -and
having a central rod (30) that is introduced through the spreader structure (10)
and in particular through the first connecting section (16) and is attached to
the second connecting section (14) on the opposite side, wherein the central
rod includes and having a tube (34) that surroundssurrounding the central rod
(30), by means of which tubeso that the first connecting section (16) can be
slid along the central rod (30) in along the longitudinal direction thereofaxis.

25. (currently amended) The Sspreader device structure according to
Claim 24, characterized by further comprising a sheath (38) into which the
spreader structure (10), the central rod (30) and the tube (34) can be inserted
and wherein the spreader structure (10) can be opened during or after it has
been ejected from the sheath (38).

26. - 28. Cancelled

29. (new) A method of using a spreader structure for insertion into a hollow organ, the method comprising:

_____ providing an elongated body having a plurality of spreader rods extending evenly from around the elongated body, wherein the spreader rods each have at least one area of reduced flexural stiffness in comparison to adjacent areas;

_____ positioning the elongated body on a spreader device;

_____ inserting the elongated body and spreader device into the hollow organ while the elongated body is at least partially compressed; and

_____ expanding the elongated body.

30. (new) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

_____ placing the elongated body inside a sheath while being at least partially compressed;

_____ inserting the sheath into the hollow organ;

_____ ejecting the elongated body from the sheath; and

_____ expanding the elongated body.